

**Date: 2011-12-05**

**Author: Phil Schubert, Tom Thinnes**

**Category: Oral History**

**Interview Date: December 5, 2011, 10:00 AM to Noon**

**Place: Schubert home, Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Interviewee: Phil Schubert, Tom Thinnes**

**Interviewer: Larry Massie**

**Attendees: Larry Massie, Phil Schubert, Marcia Schubert, Tom Thinnes**

**Topic: John Fetzer's Spiritual Search**

**Draft: February 8, 2012**

**Edit: PB 2018-01-29**

Larry This is Larry Massie on December 5, 2011, talking to Phil Schubert, his wife Marcia, and Tom Thinnes, at Phil's residence in Oshtemo Township. Phil, on the phone you said that you accompanied John Fetzer to Grand Rapids many times to have chelation treatments. Would you tell me about that?

Marcia Were they doing chelation at Borgess, too?

Tom They were either doing it or they were researching it, and I can't remember. I thought that it was possible—

Phil Are you catching all this? If I could look in my records, I would give you the specific date of the chelation, because we did keep our records.

Larry It would have been in the 1980's, wasn't it? Early 1980's?

Marcia It was before me, honey, I think.

Phil I don't know, Larry but I can take you right there to it.

Larry But riding up and back with him, you said 40 times approximately?

Phil Less than 40 but more than 30; it was about a \$40 crack and being who I am—

Larry I'm sure he was concerned about that, too.

Phil That's true.

Larry Did you have conversations in the car?

Phil Oh, sure we did.

Larry Did he—

Phil      What are you going to do?

Larry     Did he ever talk about any of this esoteric [stuff]?

Phil      No.

Larry     No, he didn't.

Phil      I got an okay on a story, and I wanted to talk to him about his life. I got to know about his life, of which you know where he came from, Berrien Springs.

Larry     Actually, Indiana.

Phil      Indiana. That's how he fell in love with baseball.

Larry     Right.

Phil      You know the story there. Then he came to Berrien, and he got let go there because they ran out of money. What does he do? According to him, he got into a truck, he and I think his wife, and they came to Kalamazoo. This is my story. He went to the second floor of the Burdick hotel. Am I right so far?

Larry     Yes.

Phil      He talked to the person in charge of money at the bank, and the guy turned him down. His answer, the reason for [it was,] "How do you sell air?" You know the story.

Tom      Clark, Duncan Clark was the president.

Larry     Was that the one?

Phil      So Fetzer—from that point on what happened?

Tom      His studio was on the eighth floor.

Phil      Ultimately.

Larry     But he started out on the second I think, yes.

Phil      Anyway—

Tom      Kalamazoo didn't have a radio station. That's why he came.

Phil      But Rhea sold that, and John sold that, and they'd come back and they'd type them. That's how it got started.

Larry     Then the 590 case was important.

Phil      That's the vision, I think.

Tom      That was luck.

Phil      Well—

Larry     Call it perseverance too.

Tom      Perseverance, hiring the right attorney in Washington. Horace Loans, is that his name?

Larry     Yes.

Tom      God, I remember this stuff.

Phil      He pulled together a package which was saleable. How many counties, five, four?

Larry     For WKZO?

Phil      Yes, but it had a saleable item of thousands of listeners or viewer-ships. Then television takes off, Fetzer's on the ground floor.

Larry     He bought stations in other parts of the country.

Phil      They were not successful, so he dumped them.

Larry     He made money on them when he sold them.

Phil      Gilmore, Jim, he followed the leader and everything he followed lost. I talked to Mariette, that's Jim's secretary. I've gotten to know her quite well—and they were loss leaders.

Tom      He was battling that station in Omaha. At night their signal was coming in to Kalamazoo and screwing up his signal; that's when he devised this directional antenna.

Phil      I didn't know that.

Larry     That's the 590 case. We have found out that when he was in Washington, and it didn't look like the 590 case was going to be successful, he consulted an astrologer in 1938. She told him that it was going to work out okay, soon, and it

did. That gave some credence to this belief. Before that, he had gone down to Camp Chesterfield, which is a spiritualist camp down in Indiana.

Phil Do they still make those cigarettes?

Larry This is a different one, yes. We went down there. He went down there in 1934 and consulted a medium, and this is according to his testimony.

Phil This is Fetzer?

Larry This is John Fetzer. Eight years before Lynn Dailey was born, this medium told him that she was going to come into his life and be a very important part of it.

Phil I don't know who Lynn Dailey is.

Larry Carolyn Dailey. It was his long-time secretary.

Phil Oh, her. She was a sweetheart.

Larry Very nice lady. You start to see where things come into his life and he gets more and more into it. During World War II, he was the radio censor, and he was privy to these reports of UFOs. Both the American air corps, and the Germans later, it turned out were seeing [UFOs], and the RAF. Hundreds of these unidentified flying objects during the war; they still—we can't explain them, but that opened that up to him. He had success with dowsing which is kind of a supernatural thing.

Phil I don't know what dowsing is.

Larry Dowsing is you go and you look for water with a branch, and that was out there.

Marcia Like divining?

Larry Yes. He hired a guy out in Tucson. They said, "There's no way, there's never going to be any water out here." He hired a guy, and the guy said, "200 feet you'll run into water." So, this guy drilled and he went down about 100 feet. He said, "John, I'm pulling my drill out of here. I'm just wasting your money." "Keep going." He said that about two or three times, and within six inches of 200 feet he found a gushing spring. If you have enough of those experiences like that, it tends to become maybe possible.

Phil I did an in-depth on Fetzer at his building on campus, and I don't remember the name of the building.

Larry Oh, the Fetzer Business Building.

Phil      Yeah, and we had the place to ourselves. It was sound proof, and he told me about his experience finding . . . he was one of the how do you say it? He was one of the few people that got into Hitler's inner sanctum.

Larry     The bunker right after—yes.

Phil      I don't know what happened after that, but he was there and he was proud of it.

Larry     He got Hitler's telephone and Goering's gas mask.

Tom      A Luke somebody's (inaudible) too.

Phil      You know all that. I don't have to tell you that.

Larry     It's interesting. He had all that power during World War II.

Phil      Then when he got out of the Army, he wanted it disbanded.

Tom      He never was in the army.

Larry     He wore a uniform but he wasn't really—

Phil      It's like the CIC. That's what I was. I was an agent, but he knew I was what I was; but they wanted to get rid of—

Tom      He closed down the bureau of censorship.

Larry     That's right. One of the few government agencies that ever closed.

Phil      You're way ahead of me.

Tom      I've always been, Phil, way ahead of you.

Larry     He was very interested in genealogy, and he did two books of genealogy.

Phil      Both of them failed, didn't they?

Larry     They weren't a commercial venture. He did them for the family, and gave out copies of them. But when he ran into difficulties in tracing his ancestors in Europe, he consulted a Ouija board; it led him to certain records, which he looked up. If you look in one of his genealogies, there are line engravings of some of his ancestors that went back before photography; a medium drew those for him.

Phil      I didn't know that.

Larry It becomes plausible to him when he has success with these endeavors.

Phil Bruce, I've always been confused about Bruce. Now he was in relation to John—

Larry He was John Fetzter's grand-nephew.

Phil Grand-nephew. Bruce has kind of dropped - he's in real-estate as far as I understand.

Larry No, he's very active on the board, on the Fetzter Trust. There are two boards. One, the Institute board, and then the Fetzter Trust board.

Phil What does he do?

Larry He manages it. He's the president of it.

Phil They don't seem to have much publicity.

Larry I don't know. We're working closely with him in this project. here's a tendency in almost any foundation over the years, for the purpose of the founder to become diluted or actually shift. Bruce is concerned about that, about his great uncle's—he put all this money into everything. He wants to see that these things are documented, what his interests were.

Phil John's interests.

Tom Same way with the Irving Gilmore Foundation.

Phil Huh?

Tom The Irving Gilmore Foundation has the same kind of sense of that. They want to keep it—

Larry Most foundations, it happens. It happens. It's gradual. People come in.

Phil What does Bruce do all day?

Larry I don't know. I just see him once in a while, but he's got an office and he works in his office.

Phil It's in Schoolcraft?

Larry It's in Schoolcraft, at Mike Gergely's place. You know Mike Gergely?

Tom Yes, he's another one. He was the attorney for something.

Larry     He was John's attorney for setting up the Trust and everything.

Phil       I don't know that stuff.

Tom       When I was there, it was like these shadow figures. Every once in a while (Jim) Gordon would come through, and Mike Gergely would come through.

Phil       Why are these white statues there? There's a story. Every once in a while at the Foundation you see beautiful—

Larry      Crystals.

Phil       Beautiful.

Larry      He believed in the power of crystals, the power of pyramids. There are some people out in Allegan that built a pyramid, the Hardy's. Did you ever interview them?

Phil       I don't know.

Larry      Yes, they're out at Dumont Lake, and John would go out there and get in the pyramid and meditate. But he believed that there was a power locked up within crystals, and this might go back to his belief that he was in Atlantis, too.

Phil       I don't know what you're talking about.

Larry      Atlantis, the lost world. It was a highly-sophisticated culture. They did something wrong and it disappeared, but the theory is that some of that wisdom went to Egypt.

Phil       It didn't come this way. You've been in John's office?

Larry      Yes, in his original office, yes.

Phil       No, no not the one at KZO. I'm talking about the palace. I'm talking about where he ended up.

Larry      At the Institute?

Phil       Yes, that is an awesome, awesome adventure.

Larry      The building, it sure is.

Phil       No, his office. You go in there and the first thing I noticed when I went in was that he was higher than everyone else. When you went in to say hello to John,

you almost felt like you should genuflect. He's God. Then behind he had this window that was, I don't know how big it was, but it was bigger than big; that kind of set him off as a Jesus figure. When he had people come in, people meaning the Detroit Tigers team, and he had a very prominent movie star, Shirley MacLaine being one of them, I think.

Tom She was there for a board meeting.

Larry it wasn't because she was a movie star that she was there.

Phil No, she believed in that same area that he [did]. But I was kind of impressed. I'm easily impressed.

Larry In his office there at WKZO, he had a huge desk; there is something about you're behind a big, huge desk. It's a power.

Phil Sure it is. It's all in the ambiance.

Tom Have you talked to the first president?

Larry No, we haven't.

Tom What's his name?

Larry Glenn Olds?

Tom No, no.

Larry Yes, I know who you're talking about. Swierenga.

Tom Swierenga, Lloyd Swierenga.

Phil Now who was the crook?

Tom Swierenga, when he was the president; I recall, the president of the Foundation, this is what they were into. They were into that type of stuff, chelation therapy, electronic medicine, Srinivasan. That's what they were into.

Larry Definitely. They had a laboratory there.

Tom Yes. Then it switched off when I got there. They were moving into holistic medicine, and that culminated with —what's his name? Guy from Washington, his series.

Larry Oh, Bill Moyers.



Tom Bill Moyers. That's when I was out the door. In between that, they decided they didn't want to be a foundation anymore. They didn't want to give money away. They wanted to be an institute and get money.

Larry I think they're still funding things.

Tom Yes, but they're an institute. They're not giving away \$2 million for this or that.

Larry I don't know. I'm not sure.

Tom When Olds came in, that's when Fetzer came to me and said, "I want you to help get my foundation into the limelight, into the sunlight." I said, "Okay, I can do that." That's why I went there. Then Olds came in.

Phil Now Olds, he was - I call him a crook.

Tom He was a wheeler-dealer, in my opinion.

Larry He'd been the president of a university.

Tom Then he was up in Alaska.

Phil Alaska, was he a senator.

Tom No, he was a college president up there too.

Phil That's right.

Tom He came in, and it was like a lightning bolt. I was also supposed to finish the book. But he came in and he wanted to have this big conference, remember that?

Larry Yes, they did.

Tom We pulled that off, but it took six months. Consequently, I didn't have a chance to do any writing.

Larry Oh, he had you doing other things.

Tom Yes. I was doing the conference, and then I had to produce a conference booklet. I said, "Glenn, I've got to go to all those sessions." "No, you've got to be involved." So I was involved. Then it took another three months of me, going through the whole conference to write the booklet. About that time, Olds wanted to inject himself into Fetzer's book, and I rebelled from that.

Larry Into the book you were writing.

Tom Yes, he wanted to—

Phil Question: Did Olds try to buy property?

Tom That's the property on Elm Street or M Street.

Phil Overlooking the lake?

Tom Overlooking the lake, no. They were going to build on M Avenue, L Avenue.

Larry This was a site other than where the Institute is now?

Tom Yes, he wanted a presidential home.

Larry Oh, for himself.

Phil Didn't Dale Lake, the former president of KVCC, add something? No?

Tom No, he wanted it, so they built this palatial estate. L Avenue, M Avenue, something like that. And, Oh, by the way, we're going to make it into a conference center, which violated the zoning ordinances. They said no.

Larry But they did build it?

Tom They built it. Yes, it's still there. The house is there. Somebody bought it. I remember Glenn Olds calling me; he said, "Can you do anything to change the mind of the Oshtemo zoning board?" I said, "No, Glenn, that's not my style. I can't do that. If we violated the zoning ordinances, we violated the zoning ordinances. I'm not going to stick my neck out to try to change their minds." That pissed him off. But anyway, he got ushered out the door.

Phil Wasn't that wonderful?

Tom They got Lehman, and everyone breathed a sigh of [relief?]. It was going to be great. And then they ushered all the rest of us out the door.

Phil Lame?

Tom Robert Lehman.

Phil I don't know that name. Is he there now?

Tom He's on the board.

Larry Yes, he is.

Tom They've gone two or three presidents, haven't they, since Lehman?

Larry Yes, they've got one now whose name is Larry Sullivan. He's a scholar from Notre Dame.

Tom They switched now. They shied away from Srinivasan and the electronic medicine, and then the holistic health, which to me made a lot of sense. Now they're into love and consciousness.

Larry Love and forgiveness.

Tom Yes.

Larry Love and forgiveness; you can't say anything wrong about that, can you?

Tom I think we ought to bring Al-Qaeda over here, kind of help him out a little bit.

Phil The thing I really was impressed with about Fetzer was when I went there the first time. There are two things: When I went to the bathroom, you started to look to flush it, they flushed. They flushed without you having to do it. Let me tell you an interesting story. Just kind of humorous. Don Rice and I crawled on our hands and knees for over half hour in snow that deep. It had been a beautiful snow storm, and I wanted to capture the beauty of the Institute. We picked a spot and we crawled up to the peak of this whatever it was.

Tom Pissed off the troll.

Phil I don't know what, but we got away with it. There were no footprints, and we were freezing our tushies off, and he takes this picture. Now we've got a picture, which we used by the way in Encore Magazine; I think that they blew it up and they put it somewhere in the entrance. But the other—oh darn, I forgot them.

Marcia When you were doing John Fetzer.

Phil I needed a front cover. How do you make a man who hasn't smiled in a long time, smile? You get him to stand, and you say, "Mr. Fetzer, Don Rice is strategically located behind me. Don is ready," and I said, "Mr. Fetzer, trust me. I went up to him and I lifted his little hat, and that tickled him; that's how I got the front cover.

Larry That was the first article?

Phil I don't know. It was a keeper. It had emotion.

Larry Yes, I know that cover. That's how you did it?

Phil I had to tickle him.

Larry Did you ever have to do that with anybody else?

Phil No.

Tom I think that the piece that we did in '88 on Fetzer talked about the building. That's what the Fetzer Foundation was doing at that point, at that time. Then Olds came in.

Larry He was in that issue.

Phil Do you want a picture of Olds?

Larry Picture of Olds? No.

Phil You don't want a picture do you? I've got one if you—

Tom When he started to take hold, then we started to get into a whole bunch of different things. I was just going through some of my old papers. I can remember some of these Maurice Strong water deals out in Colorado, and somebody up in Alaska. For every ten, maybe one would work out. Like Dean Ornish. That was holistic health, dealing with the heart. That was legitimate, the Dean Ornish thing, but most of it was off the wall.

Larry There was a guy by the name of Hardt that they funded for different things.

Tom I don't think this was legal. The guy was on the board. He was at Princeton University and they were doing weather; they had balls or something in a container and [were experimenting] whether you could make the balls move. They funded him for about 30 years. What was his name? Robert? He finally retired from Princeton. I can remember reading about him, finally left, but he was funded.

Larry Then there was a copper wall experiment.

Tom Yes, he may have been doing that one. Trying to get your mind to do something with these balls or whatever. The holistic medicine made big sense to me.

Larry Sure it did. I talked to Dick Williams. He's still doing that, mapping the brain out and things like that.

Tom That seemed to make sense. I used to go around town talking about the Institute, Foundation, whatever you want to call it, and I could see people saying, "Oh,

that makes sense.” You’ve got to think you’re going to be all right. You could think. You have the power of your brain, use it.

Larry Since John was really a pioneer in radio, working with things you can’t see, invisible rays, wavelengths, it’s a natural leap for him to think, “Well, maybe there’s more out there that we can’t see.”

Tom Sure, sure. If you watch the history channel or anything like that, the stuff about astronomy, what they’re coming up with out there, how every 10,000 years the earth tips, and all kinds of stuff. But Srinivasan and some of those others were actually [?]. You remember Star Trek? Bones, putting that [?], and then figure out what it was. That’s basically what they were doing.

Larry Was he trying to invent that?

Tom Yes, that’s it basically. You put something electrical here, and you can figure out what’s going on in there.

Larry The aura, the auras of the human body.

Tom Yes, they were working on—

Larry I wanted to interview him, but he’s gone back to India.

Tom Srinivasan?

Larry Yes, did you know him?

Tom Yes, he was there. They kind of ushered him out the door, too. I think Olds said, “See you,” and he left; but that was the interesting thing.

Phil What’s happening now at Fetzer?

Larry They’re getting ready for their big push; they’re going to have a huge conference in Assisi, in Italy, and bring scholars from all over the world.

Tom Is St. Francis coming back too for it, going to channel him in here?

Larry I don’t know, but to promote love and forgiveness.

Tom Why don’t they do it in Afghanistan?

Phil When we got married, we were living next to a lady who did an hour program on the Fetzer Institute. What was her name? Come on. Pipes were frozen and—oh, forget it.

Marcia    There was a doctor who owned that place next door to us, so I don't know what you mean.

Phil        My point is completely forgotten.

Tom        It was a good one though, I'll bet.

Phil        It was a keeper. Are we about done?

Larry       Yes, we can stop now.

Tom        I just want to tell you, Larry, that most of my conversations with Fetzer involved his business, the business side of it, and the baseball side of it and what the deal was. The book was going to be [about] his business, how he came up through the ranks in radio and television, his role as a censor. Then it was his baseball life. The third part was going to be the Foundation. I never got a chance to do that.

Larry       You weren't going to do anything with the spiritual search?

Tom        That was going to be part of it, the Foundation; I haven't read that stuff in a long time. I think every once in a while I touched upon something.

Larry       You did, you did.

Tom        But I was doing business. I was at the radio, I said that's where I found this. I was going through all my files, I was looking at that, and then saying, "Okay." There was a deal to print those first two volumes - we sent it up to Ernie Harwell.